

HA-1857

"A" TOWER

HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Modern Period

Prehistorical/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape
Architecture, and Community Planning; Government/Law

Resource Type:

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Architectural/Military

Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. HA-1857

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic "A" Tower

and/or common Building 373

2. Location

street & number Lanyard Road

☐ not for publication

city, town Aberdeen

☐ vicinity of 2nd congressional district

state Maryland

county Harford

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name U.S. Army Aberdeen Proving Ground Support Activity (STEAP-DIC)

street & number Building 310

telephone no.: (410) 278-4006

city, town Aberdeen Proving Ground

state and zip code Maryland 21005-5001

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse, Land Records Ofc liber

street & number Main Street

folio

city, town Bel Air

state Maryland 21014

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register Nomination of Main Front District

date Still in draft

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. HA-1857

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count: one structure, no other contributing buildings.

"A" Tower sits in the center of the Main Front firing area. The Main Front is situated south of the operations and administrative core and southeast of the Plum Point residential area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

The Main Front is clearly defined by its linear arrangement of built resources and roadways. This pattern was established during its initial period of construction of 1918. Subsequent building campaigns during the 1930s and 1940s retained this east-west orientation, and reinforced the linear plan of the Main front. Two rows of low, one-story brick warehouses are aligned along an east-west axis. These buildings provided necessary support facilities for the weapons testing activities, including munitions storage, preparation, and research laboratories. The buildings front onto three roads: Recoil Avenue, Lanyard Road, and Main Front Road.

Inter-War Period, 1919-1940

The majority of extant buildings within the Main Front were constructed during the inter-war permanent construction campaign. Eighteen buildings survive from this period. Many of these replaced wood-frame temporary facilities constructed during World War I. A variety of weapons testing-related buildings were constructed at this time and include laboratories, firing shelters, a watchtower, test facilities, and ordnance storage facilities. Most of these buildings were not built according to standardized plans because of their specialized functions.

"A" Tower, (Building 373) was added to the firing range in 1934 and serves as a focal among the lower, one-story brick buildings. The multi-story steel frame tower is reinforced with diagonal cross braces that extend the entire height of the tower. A small shed-roof watchtower is located at the upper platform and faces south, overlooks the firing range.

The following description of "A" Tower is the result of a structural inspection on 30 March 1995 by Mark Hinman, P.E..

The "A" Tower was constructed in 1934 and consists of two main parts, the tower and a single room building located at the top of the tower. The 64 square foot tower has a 82' 7" height to the platform on top. The tower is made of steel with legs made up of channels with the flanges back to back connected by riveted single lacing on both sides forming a rectangular cross-section. The tower legs are founded to the ground by way of concrete footings. The tower legs are braced at the quarter points by I beams and each panel has steel rod shear bracing. The towers legs are made of what appears to be two 6" by 2" channels with 1 3/4" wide by 12 1/2" long by 3/8" thick single lacing on both flanges forming a rectangular cross-section. The lacing is connected to the channel by rivets. At 3/4 point of the tower there is a wood platform with wood hand rails. At the top of the tower is a wood platform with steel hand-rails with a one room wood building. The platform has wood tile flooring and wood walls. The building has a wood shed roof and as originally constructed the room had seven windows, one facing North and West, two facing East and three facing South. Currently all of the windows have been broken and no glass remains. The room has one six panel wood door facing to the West. The sides of the building are constructed of wood siding. A wooden stairwell provides access to the building with a metal vertical ladder on the North-west tower leg.

8. Significance

Survey No. HA-1857

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Constructed in 1934 during the inter-War period (1919-1940), the watchtower ("A" Tower) served as a focal point among the lower, one story brick buildings at the Main Front. The Main Front Historic District will be nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The "A" Tower is a contributing resource within the district. The multi-story steel frame tower is reinforced with diagonal cross braces that extend the entire height of the tower. A small shed-roof watchtower is located at the upper platform and faces South, overlooking the firing range.

A-Tower, located on the Main Front, was used as a range control tower between 1934 and 1970. Occasionally, the tower was used as an observation tower. During daylight firings, a red flag was used if inert ammunition was being fired, a black flag if the test was firing against armor plate and a yellow flag used if the rounds contained high explosives. A red light was illuminated on the tower during night firing. The tower controlled small arms weapons up to 280mm rounds. Proofing of weapons, ammunition and propellant tests and tank gun weapons were among the tests controlled by A-Tower. The control area stretched from the Main Front up to and including Michaelsville. One person manned the tower.

The main purposes of "A" Tower between 1934-1970 was to coordinate and direct the test firing of weapons being tested at the Main Front firing ranges. Towers like the "A" Tower were replaced with Range Control Centers that utilized radio control and computer record keeping instead of the visual control of the range towers.

The Main Front Historic District encompasses a unique group of functional buildings. The specialized design and use of the buildings in the district reflects their association with weapons testing, research, and development activities from 1918 to 1945. These resources are related directly to the primary mission of APG. Constructed as part of the Army's permanent construction campaign, these built resources illustrate the evolution of weapons testing at APG.

The Main Front district primarily contains buildings from the inter-war and World War II periods. The majority of World War I structures were replaced during the 1930s building campaign, the initial development established the linear plan that was maintained during their later building campaigns. Permanent buildings during the 1930s and 1940s were constructed from Quartermaster Corps-standardized plans as well as site specific designs developed for individual buildings.

The testing range is located south of the Main Front and is comprised of a large expanse of open terrain that terminates at the Chesapeake Bay. The overall plan of the Main Front is defined by the row of test facilities and firing barricades located along the edge of the range to support mobile artillery.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HA-1857

- (1) Draft National Register Nomination for the Main Front Historic District.
- (2) Interview with Mr. Mark Hinman, P.E.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Spesutie, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Verbal boundary description and justification

76° 6" 49.8 West Longitude

39° 28" 18.3 North Latitude

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas Reed Macmillan, Cultural Resources Managerorganization Environmental Conservation and Restoration
Division, STEAP-SH-ER

date _____

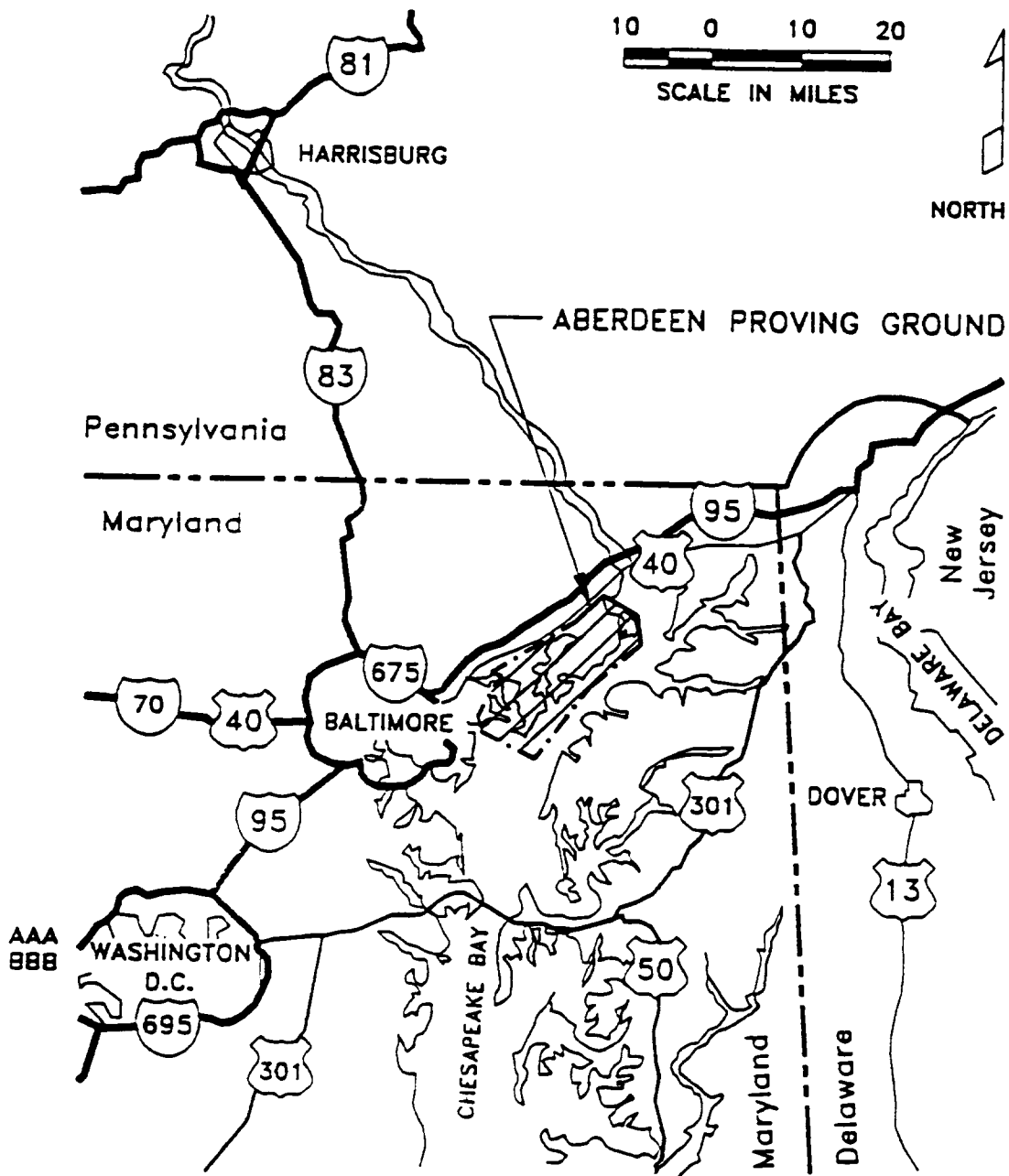
street & number Aberdeen Proving Groundtelephone (410) 278-6755city or town Aberdeenstate Maryland 21005-5001

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

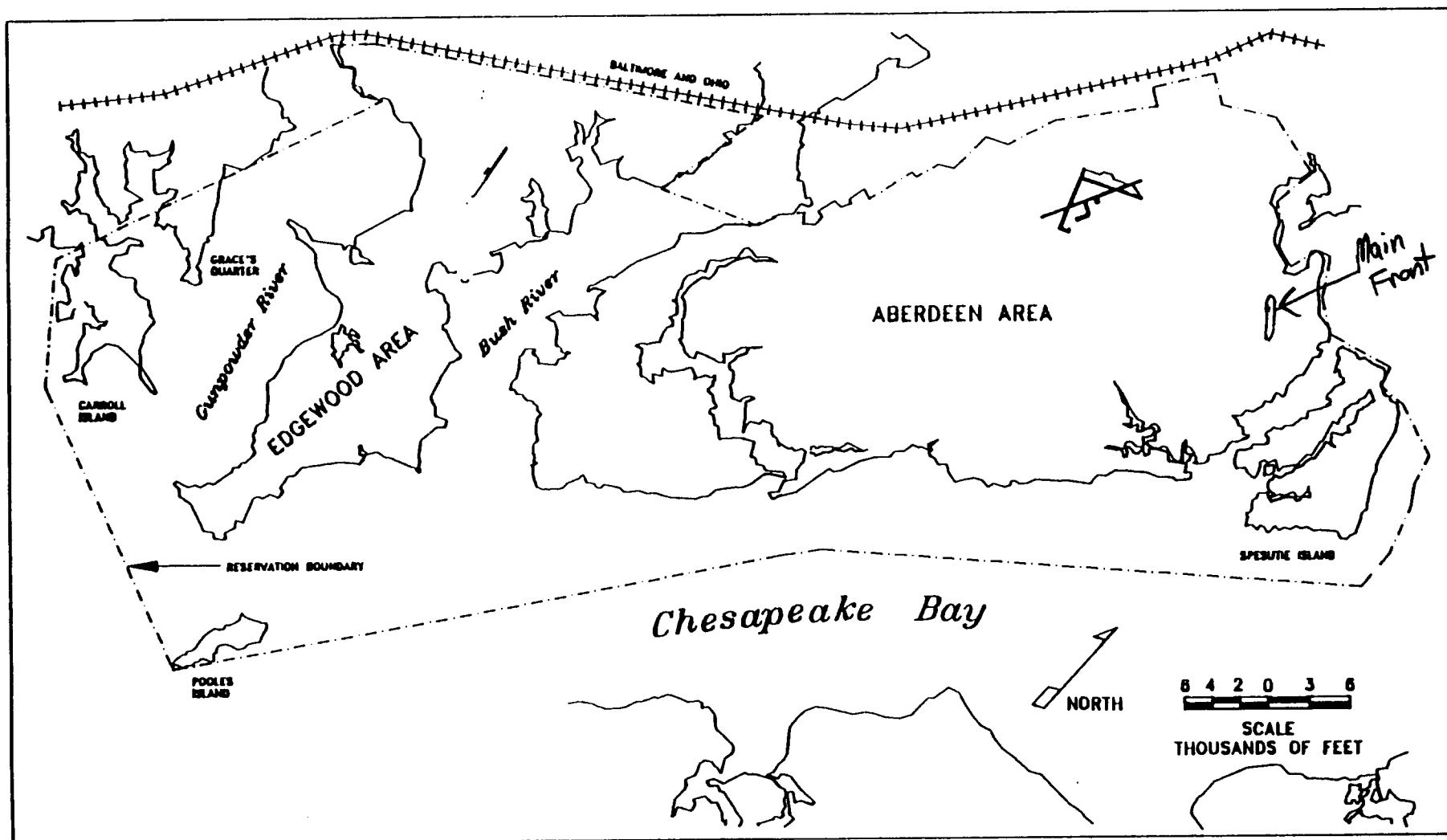
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
RECEIVED
JUN 10 1976
OFFICE OF THE STATE HISTORIC ARCHIVIST
1028



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6A-100



HR-1557

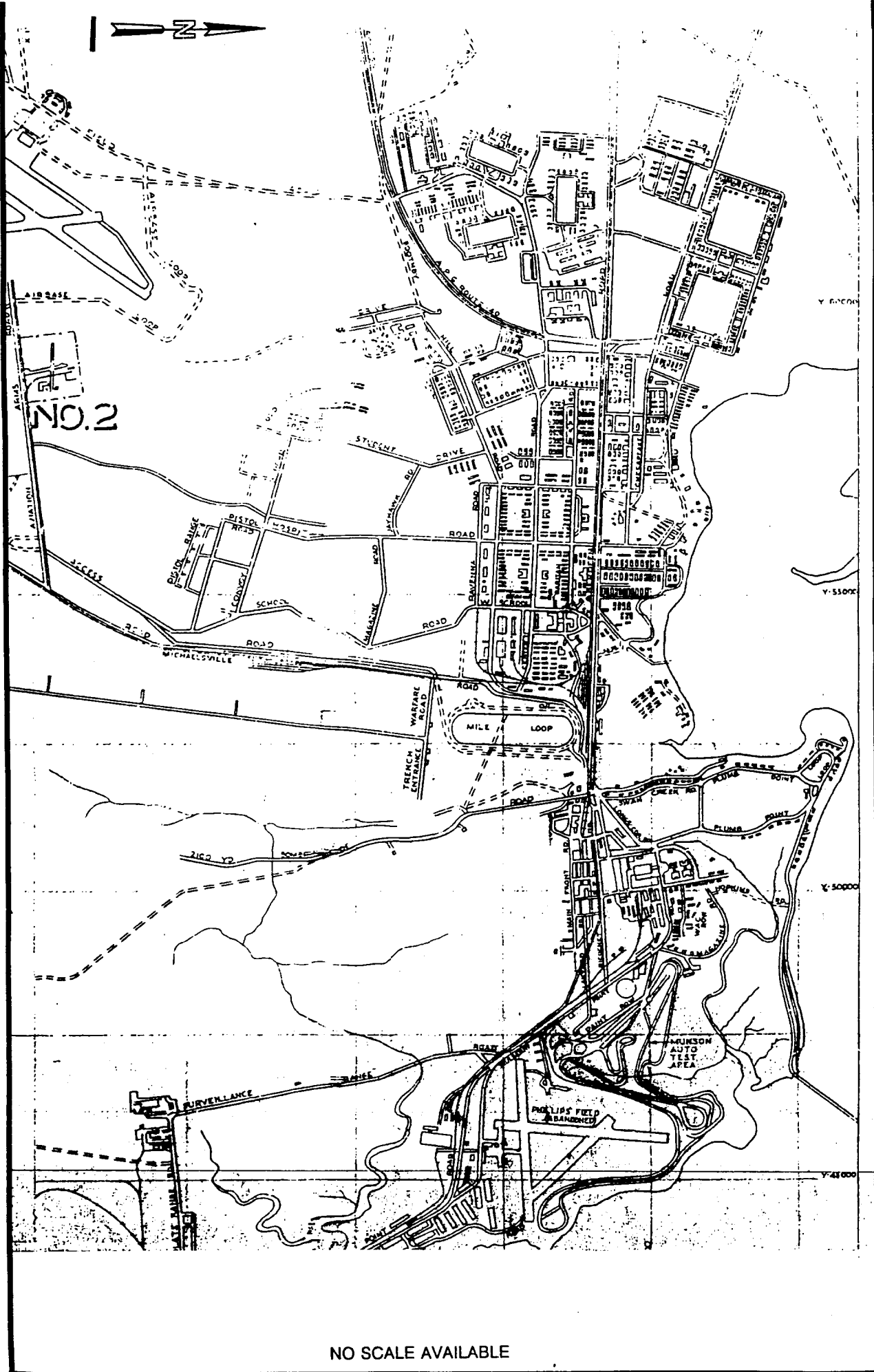
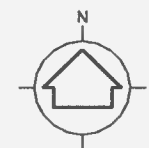


Figure 12. Engineers Department Map of the Northern Portion of Aberdeen Proving Ground (1944).



MAP SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

NA-1857

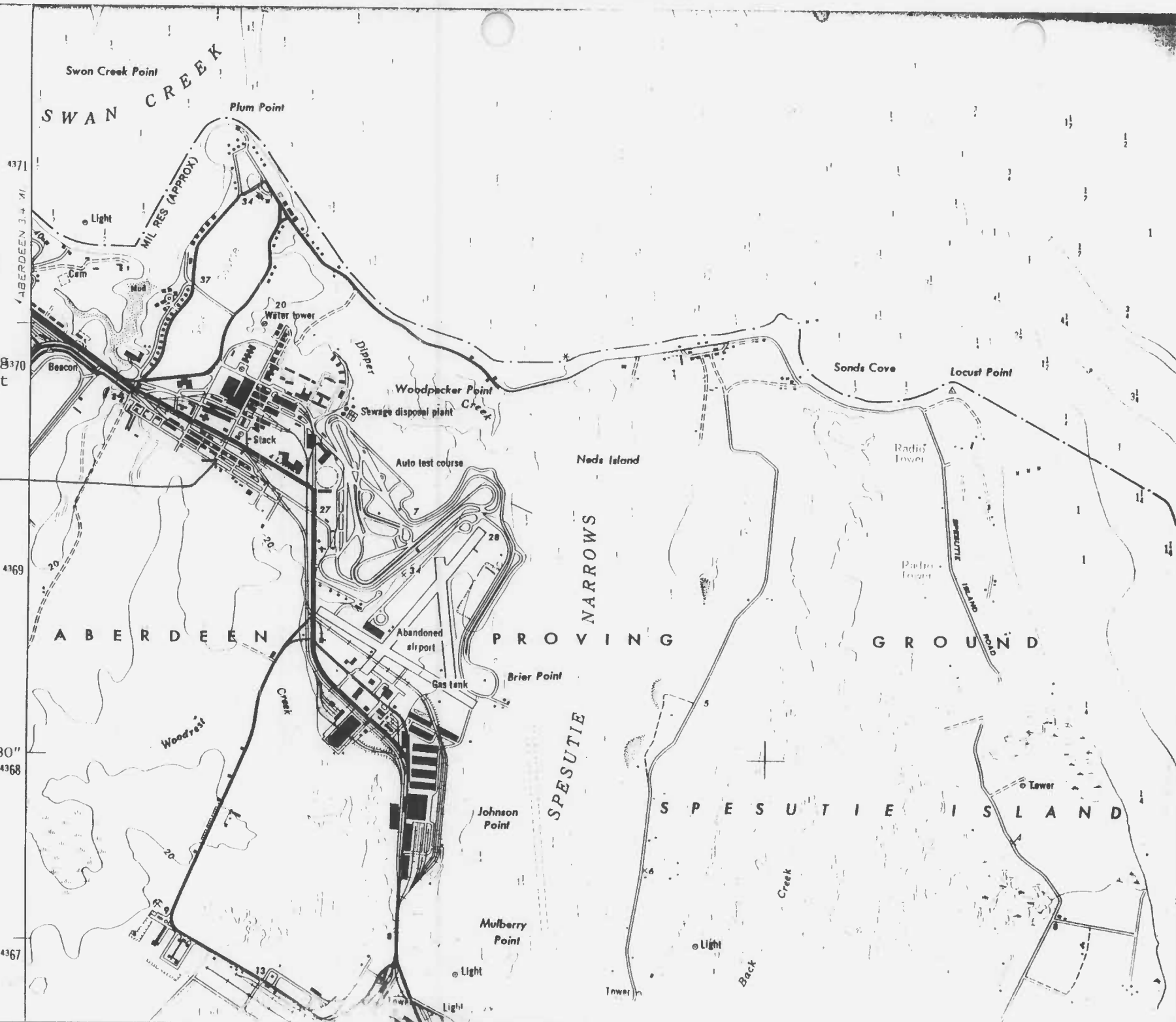
Aberdeen Proving
Ground, MD

"A" Tower
HA-1857
76°6'49.8 W. Long
39°28'18.3 N. Lat

"A" Tower

27'30"
4368

HA-1857





SITE NAME: A-Tower (BLDG 373)
SITE NUMBER: HA-1857
SITE LOCATION: Aberdeen Proving Ground
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Gwaltney
DATE OF PHOTO: 30 March 1995
DIRECTION OF PHOTO: 180° South

HA-1857
A-Tower (Bldg 373)
Hartford County, Maryland
Beth Gwaltney
3/30/95
Maryland SHPO
A-tower, 180° south
1 of 5



SITE NAME: A-TOWER (BLDG 373)
SITE NUMBER: HA-1857
SITE LOCATION: Aberdeen Proving Ground
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Gwaltney
DATE OF PHOTO: 30 March 1995
DIRECTION OF PHOTO: 320° N. EAST

HA-1857
A-Tower (Bldg 373)
Aberdeen Proving Ground
Beth Gwaltney
3/30/95
Maryland SHPO
A-Tower 320° East
2 of 5



SITE NAME: A-Tower (BLDG 373)
SITE NUMBER: HA-1857
SITE LOCATION: Aberdeen Proving Ground
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Gwaltney
DATE OF PHOTO: 30 March 1995
DIRECTION OF PHOTO: 305° N West

HA-1857

A-Tower

Hanford County Maryland

Beth Gwaltney

3/30/95

Maryland SHPO

A-TOWER, 305° N. West

305°



SITE NAME: A-Tower (BLDG 373)
SITE NUMBER: HA-1857
SITE LOCATION: Abdeen Proving Ground
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Gwaltney
DATE OF PHOTO: 30 MAR 1995
DIRECTION OF PHOTO: 32° N. EAST

HA-1857

A-Tower (Bldg 373)

Hanford County Maryland

Beth Gwaltney

3/30/95

Maryland SIFPO

A-Tower, 32° N EAST

61085



SITE NAME: A-Tower (BLDG 373)
SITE NUMBER: HA-1857
SITE LOCATION: Aberdeen Proving Ground
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Gwaltney
DATE OF PHOTO: 30 March 1995
DIRECTION OF PHOTO: 281° WEST

HA-1857

A-TOWER (BLDG 373)

Newford County, Maryland

Beth Gwaltney

3/30/95

Maryland SHPO

A-TOWER 281° WEST

5 OF 5